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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED NOFORN CAPTION AND PARA 3.
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO UK REQUEST FOR OPTIONS TO RESUME
NAVAL TRAINING IN IRAQ

Classified By: NEA DAS Michael Corbin for reasons 1. 4(b) and (d)

11. (U) This is a response to an action request.

12. (C/NF) Summary and Guidance: Reftel requested guidance on what message to deliver to the UK Embassy regarding resumption of their Naval training mission in Iraq. The Department suggests the following (keyed to Reftel request):
11. The UK should actively pursue a vote on its bi-lateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) when the Iraqi Council of Representatives (COR) reconvenes. 2. UK forces should not be placed under the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I) at this time. 3. If, however, the UK has not secured its agreement by October, options for moving UK forces under NTM-I should be considered at that time.

13. (C/NF) The UK's naval trainers have been stationed in Kuwait since July when the COR failed to pass an extension of the MOU allowing the UK's forces to remain in Iraq. We encourage the UK to engage the Iraqis to seek passage of the agreement when the COR reconvenes in September. However, current USG efforts should prioritize the NATO Long Term Agreement (LTA), which is also likely to come before the COR in the next session. UK forces should not be moved under the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I) at this time because of the potential this move has of interfering with passage of the NATO LTA. However, the UK trainers may be able to operate under NTM-I sometime in the future, should attempts to achieve support for its own agreement ultimately fail and if the Iraqis recognize the importance of the Naval training mission at Umm Qassr. We should revisit this option in October.

Encourage the UK Embassy to Seek COR Approval of its MOU

14. (C/NF) The Iraqi COR is set to reconvene after Ramadan, sometime in mid-September. Although the prospect of a successful COR vote is small, we believe that it is worthwhile to encourage the UK to engage the Iraqis to try to pass the UK-Iraq MOU in the upcoming session. However, based on events in July (staunch Sadrist resistance to the agreement), we realize that this may be difficult. The UK Ambassadors have stated that they would need a new arrangement by the first week of September or will have to redeploy their forces from the region, a decision that should be made by their Embassy.
UK Forces Should Not be Moved Under NTM-I at this Time

15. (C/NF) Post should make clear that the NTM-I option is not a sound one. Folding the UK mission into the NTM-I will appear like a bait and switch maneuver to the Iraqis, which could undermine Iraqi support for the NTM-I mission.

¶6. (C/NF) Furthermore, adding the UK Naval trainers to NTM-I might violate the current personnel cap of 300 and seeking to raise the cap at this time would certainly undermine Iraqi support for the NTM-I LTA. Support for the 300 person cap vice 200 required the direct intervention of the PM, suggesting that there would be strong opposition to raising the cap at this time.

¶7. (C/NF) Staffing decisions for NTM-I should be driven by GOI and Allied priorities. The Spanish have recently offered 30-40 Guardia Civile to assist on border training in line with Iraqi requests for such training; UK officer training at Ar Rustamiyah is comprised of a dozen personnel unrelated to the Naval training request. Both missions should fit within the current personnel limits of the NTM-I agreement. At a future date we could seek an increased cap as a long-term goal to accommodate new training efforts by NATO members, including the UK.

U.S. Forces Provision of Force Protection at Umm Qasr

¶8. (C/NF) Even if the UK only sought to place a small number of Navy trainers (30-40) under NTM-I without violating the cap, it would probably still be seen by the Iraqis as an underhanded move. However, Post may wish to remind the GOI that after August 2010, USF-I will change mission and therefore transfer authority for this training mission to the GOI. If the GOI does not wish to have a UK presence in Iraq, they must be prepared to cover force protection at Umm Qasr, as well as training requirements, allow another third country to perform the training mission, or continue the mission through NTM-I under another country configuration.

¶9. (C/NF) If, however, the Iraqis come to see the return of UK Navy trainers as a legitimate effort, we could encourage it at a later date. Post should inform the UK ambassadors that their trainers may be able to operate under NTM-I in the future, should attempts to secure Iraqi support for its own agreement ultimately fail.

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